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STATINTL

Two Democrats' Views on Viet Nam

Gruening for Talks Now, Dodd Opposed

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By SEN. THOMAS J. DODD

A question that has been asked of me repeatedly is, "Why are we in Viet Nam?" The reply to this is really very simple.

We are in Viet Nam because it is in our national interest to assist every nation, large and small, which is seeking to defend itself against Communist subversion, infiltration and aggression.

There is nothing new about this policy; it is a policy, in fact, to which every administration has adhered since the proclamation of the Truman Doctrine.

There have been some statements, I know, to the effect that the war in Viet Nam is a civil war. There is, however, conclusive proof that this is not so, that Hanoi has provided leadership for the Viet Cong insurrection, that it has supplied them massively, and that it has served as the real command headquarters for the Viet Cong.

Catastrophic Results

I cannot help feeling that those who have urged withdrawal from Viet Nam have not troubled to weigh the consequences.

As I see it, the consequences of an American defeat in Viet Nam would be so catastrophic that we simply cannot permit ourselves to think of it. For the Vietnamese people, the first consequence would be a blood-letting on a genocidal scale.

What will happen to the more than 1 million refugees from North Viet Nam? What will happen to the millions of peasants who resisted or bore arms against the Viet Cong?

I shudder to think about it. According to students of communism, Chinese communism had each cost the lives of from 25 to 50 million people.

Our withdrawal from Viet Nam would immediately confront us with an agonizing choice. If we decide to try to defend what is left of Southeast Asia against the advance of communism, it will require far more money, far more men, and far more American blood than we are today committing to the defense of Viet Nam. What

is more, it would involve a far greater risk of the major escalation which we seek to avoid.

Eclipse of America

If, on the other hand, we decide to abandon the whole of Southeast Asia to communism, as some of the proponents of withdrawal have frankly proposed, it would result in the early disintegration of all our alliances, and in the total eclipse of America as a great nation. Because no nation can remain great when its assurances are considered worthless even by its friends.

The loss of Viet Nam, moreover, will result in a dozen more Viet Nams in different parts of the world. Insurrections on the Viet Cong model are now under way in the Congo, in the Philippines and in Venezuela; incipient guerrilla movements already exist in at least half a dozen other Latin American countries; and the Chinese Communists have just announced the formation of a so-called "Patriotic Front" in Thailand.

Resemblances to Munich

The situation in Viet Nam today bears many resemblances to the situation (in the 1930s) just before Munich. (British Prime Minister Neville) Chamberlain wanted peace. (Winston) Churchill wanted peace. Chamberlain's policy won out because it is human to avoid difficulties. Churchill remained a voice crying in the wilderness. But who was right—Churchill or Chamberlain? Who was the true man of peace?

It is my belief that the tide of war in Viet Nam can be reversed and that this war can ultimately be won without an invasion of the North and without a significant intensification of our military effort.

Intensify Efforts

It is my belief that there are many measures we can take to strengthen our position. We must intensify our political warfare effort, because it is here that the Communists have been strongest and our side has been weakest.

By SEN. ERNEST GRUENING

Before our bombing of relatively unimportant military installations in North Viet Nam, the rift and feuding between Russia and Red China was constantly increasing. Our bombing has stopped that and propelled Russia towards making a common front against us with Red China.

The United States intervention in the South Vietnamese civil war cannot and will not be won on the battlefield. It is a political struggle which can only be settled at the conference table.

The Pope and the Secretary General of the United Nations have now joined France and India in urging such negotiations. Since March 10, 1964, I have been urging a negotiated settlement for the real neutralization of that troubled area of the world.

None of the signers of the Southeast Asia Treaty (SEATO) have their men fighting by our side in South Viet Nam.

Only American fighting men are in the front lines losing their lives and being injured (281 dead, 1,855 injured to date, and growing) in defense of one faction of the South Vietnamese people with a "now-you-see it, now-you-don't-see it" government while the generals back in Saigon play musical chairs, more interested in their own political and economic fortunes than in providing a stable government capable of and willing to fight the South Vietnamese Communists.

Negotiations From Strength

When we negotiate for peace in that area, we will be negotiating from strength—the strength of our 7th Fleet, which dominates that part of the world. It proves our power, we need not destroy Hanoi and lay waste to all of North Viet Nam, thereby inviting the beginning of the last world war. The 7th Fleet is there for all the world to see.

Air strikes against North Viet Nam will not affect the guerrilla war in South Viet Nam because that war is a civil war with North Viet Nam supplying far less military aid to the Viet Cong than the United States is supplying to the South Vietnamese.

Further escalation of the war in South Viet Nam will definitely lead to intervention not only by Red China, but by Soviet Russia as well. Russia can do no less if it wishes to retain its hold on its Communist satellites.

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Hanson Baldwin, the noted New York Times military expert, has estimated that if we allow ourselves to be drawn into an all-out military engagement in South Viet Nam against Red China, North Viet Nam and Russia, we would soon have up to a million American fighting men bogged down in the swamps of South Viet Nam.

In addition, we can fully expect that Red China would instigate a resumption of hostilities in Korea, forcing us to fight on at least two fronts.

Chinese Colonialism

If the conflict with communism is to be settled on the battlefield, then it is foolhardy for the United States to permit the Communists to choose the time and place for that conflict.

The Vietnamese remember well that for 2,000 years they were oppressed as Chinese colonists. They are not about to let the Red Chinese hordes swarm over their country and fasten the yoke of Colonialism around their necks—unless we leave them no alternative.

We should be just as eager to wage peace as to wage war. Let us negotiate now, before the military and political situation in South Viet Nam deteriorates further.

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